

Benjamin and Miranda Shreve Homestead,
Granary
North of County Road 25
Decker Vicinity
Big Horn County
Montana

HABS No. MT-106-D

HABS

MT-106-D

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Intermountain Support Office - Denver
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BENJAMIN AND MIRANDA SHREVE HOMESTEAD, GRANARY

HABS No. MT-106-D

I. INTRODUCTION

Location: The Benjamin and Miranda Shreve Homestead is in Big Horn County, Montana, in the south-central portion of the state. The homestead site is in the upper Tongue River Valley, and near the eastern shore of Tongue River Reservoir. Access is via Otter Creek Road (County Road 25), which heads eastward from Montana Secondary Highway 314, just above the southern end of the reservoir. Within one mile, a private mine haul road branches north from the county route, and accesses an unimproved two-track lane leading to the site. The homestead is about 1¾ miles northeast of the Highway 314 junction, and is approximately 3½ air miles north of the Wyoming border.

The granary is near the north side of the ranch complex, approximately 200 feet north-northwest of the house.

Quad: Decker

UTM: Zone: 13; Easting 358010; Northing 4989420

Date of Construction: ca. 1920

Present Owners: Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
1520 E. 6th Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620

Present Use: Abandoned

Significance: The granary contributes to the significance of the Benjamin and Miranda Shreve Homestead. It is linked to the site's important association with the agricultural development of the Tongue River Valley in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The granary also serves as an example of a vernacular building form common to the period in which it was built.

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Historian: Mark Hufstetler
Renewable Technologies, Inc.
Butte, Montana
March 1999

II. HISTORY

The precise construction date of the granary is unknown, and little building-specific historical data is available. The granary is not among the improvements listed in Benjamin Shreve's 1893 homestead patent application for his land.¹ The building's overall form, combined with the use of sawn lumber in its construction (as opposed to stone or hewn logs), suggests a construction date later than that of the other surviving Shreve buildings.

III. DESCRIPTION

The granary building is constructed of dimensional lumber. The structure displays an exterior stud design that was frequently utilized in the construction of small vernacular granaries: the wall cladding is on the interior, rather than exterior, face of the structural framing. The building measures approximately 18 feet (north-south) by 12½ feet (east-west). The pattern of the wall framing indicates that the rear (northerly) 6 feet of the building is an addition. The structure rests on a series of sandstone slabs placed at the building corners; the building has slipped off of some of these supports, and is now listing slightly to the east.

Exterior framing is constructed of 2 x 4 inch boards; vertical studs are placed approximately 20 inches on center, although this dimension varies slightly. The building's floor and interior wall surfaces are tongue-and-groove siding, with an approximate 7-inch exposure. Some of the east wall cladding is missing. The granary has a moderate-pitch wood-framed gable roof, with shallow eaves. The roof was once surfaced with wood shingles, although few remain. Some pieces of metal roofing are still in place. The interior is divided into three rooms (bins).

IV. ENDNOTES

1. General Land Office, Miles City, Montana. "Final Certificate No. 291, Homestead Application No. 506: Benjamin F. Shreve," October 1893. On file, General Land Office Records Group, National Archives, Washington, D.C.